

From: Paul Thutt
To: US DOJ
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Subject: Comment on Microsoft AntiTrust case

Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Require that Microsoft publish its file formats prior to the release of any upgrades to their product or the release of any new product. This will protect the consumer without hindering Microsoft's innovation or its pursuit of new markets. While I am certainly no fan of Microsoft and its business practices, breaking them up is not a solution.

Require that there be no "active content" in the file format. ("Active Content" is software embedded in the document file.) This would have two beneficial effects.

1. Elimination of insertion of computer viruses into another system via a document file.
2. No way for Microsoft to force usage of their software in order to make use of the document.

With the file formats published, competing products will be able to read and write the consumer's data files. The primary reason that Microsoft is in a monopoly position is because business and individuals must be able to share documents. Most businesses use Microsoft Office products and thus the document is in Microsoft's proprietary file format. Other businesses and individuals must purchase the Microsoft product in order to be able to work as a team.

Documents are the property of the business and individuals that produced them, and not of the manufacturer of the software used to save the document in a file. Empower the consumer by publishing the file formats. Perhaps, the IEEE standards for computer interfaces, floating point format, and networking protocols are good models.

With competitor's products able to read, modify and write the shared files, individual preference for features and price will determine what products are purchased. The consumer benefits from the choice.

Analogies are:

- . In automobiles, fuels are standard. Gearshift patterns are standard. Pedal placement is standard.
- . In computers, the PCI bus is a published standard created by Intel but released to the public and many vendors produce chip sets and interface cards to that standard.
- . In networking, 802.11b is a published standard for wireless networking. There are many vendors for wireless networking equipment.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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